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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 ANKARA 005029

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [EFIN](#) [MARR](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S SEPT. 1 MEETING WITH FONMIN GUL

(U) Classified by Ambassador Eric Edelman; reasons: E.O. 12958 1.4 (b,d).

11. (C) Summary: Ambassador reiterated U.S. support for Turkey's EU candidacy; pressed for Turkish agreement with Greece/Cyprus to forego annual exercises in Aegean and Cyprus; urged Turkey to use its weight in OIC to persuade Sudan to abide by UNSC resolutions on Darfur; asked for a rapid decision on the U.S. request to use Incirlik airbase as an air mobility/logistics hub; urged an opening to Armenia and a firm line on Iran; and probed FonMin Gul's thinking on the future of U.S.-Turkish bilateral relations. Asserting he had been firm with the Iranians regarding nukes, Gul gave vague answers on the other subjects. In turn he expressed frustration at EU delay on ending the isolation of Turkish Cypriots and pressed for joint action on trucker security in Iraq and U.S. action against the PKK. End summary.

12. (C) Opening by passing Gul the draft agenda for the Sept. 24 Forum for the Future (FFF) meeting on the margins of UNGA, Ambassador underscored President Bush's enduring commitment to BMENA and his realism regarding the long-term nature of the initiative; the bipartisan support for BMENA means it will remain a key element of U.S. policy. Turkey can play a constructive role as well.

13. (C) Gul confirmed that he will attend the FFF meeting and Turkey will also attend the U.S. Treasury-hosted separate meeting for finance ministers. Concerning BMENA, Gul averred that Turkey believes in the issues: "I am very sincere when I say we want to be active," he asserted. But Turkey should be more active on its own, he added; this is a strategic position, and Turkish involvement through its own official and unofficial efforts (NGOs, intellectuals) is at the top of his agenda, he added.

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EU
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14. (C) Ambassador noted that a date for Turkey's accession negotiations -- which the U.S. foresees the EU granting at its December summit -- will not only be a great accomplishment for Turkey but also validate 40 years of U.S. support for Turkey's candidacy. We understand some EU member states would prefer not to hear U.S. views, but the U.S. will continue to support Turkey's candidacy in a helpful and appropriate way. At the same time it will be crucial for Turkey to take advantage of the Dutch presidency; in our experience the Dutch Embassy in Ankara is committed to improving the channels of communication between Ankara and Brussels/capitals (Note: the Dutch Embassy has told us the Turks do not make it easy for them to manage the process and has acknowledged that the Turks find the Dutch Ambassador -- who has some of the broadest Turkish contacts among EU Ambassadors -- overbearing. End note)

15. (C) Gul made as if to brush aside EU resentment of U.S. support. An EU yes in December will have positive repercussions in Muslim countries, which are closely monitoring what happens to Turkey's candidacy, he said. These countries think that a green light to Turkey's accession negotiations will mean EU recognition of the need not to isolate the Muslim world and expect that Turkey's accession will provide a link for them to the EU.

Aegean/Cyprus Military Exercises

16. (C) Ambassador noted he had raised with D/CHOD Basbug the Greeks' and Greek Cypriots' willingness to cancel this year's Aegean and Cyprus exercises if Turkey will do so. Gul responded that the MFA needs to consult with military experts before taking a decision; in any event, relations are better between Turkey and Greece.

Northern Cyprus

17. (C) Gul segued into strong Turkish discomfort at the EU's failure to move expeditiously to end Turkish Cypriot isolation. Months have passed and the Council's legal committee, headed by a Greek, has decided there must be a unanimous decision on the Council's program to end isolation,

a program which does not meet all of Turkey's and the Turkish Cypriots' expectations. Turkey supported the Turkish Cypriots' yes in the April referendum and the Turkish side is being punished; the Greek Cypriots said no and are being rewarded. Talat is also frustrated. The EU should act wisely instead of small-mindedly; mutual trust depends on it. At the same time Turkey appreciates U.S. efforts.

8 (C) Ambassador expressed disappointment at the EU approach, a disappointment shared by the UK. The U.S. is working on the possibility of direct flights, most likely through code share arrangements with existing flights.

OIC and Darfur

9. (C) Underscoring Secretary Powell's personal engagement in seeking Sudanese compliance with UNSC resolutions and a end to the persecutions and killings in Darfur, Ambassador noted that the Janjaweed militias continue to wreak havoc. The U.S. always supported election of a Turk as OIC SecGen, and we hope Turkey as ministerial chairman in office will use its influence in OIC to have Sudan abide by UNSC resolutions. Darfur will undoubtedly be an important subject when Gul meets Secretary Powell at UNGA.

10. (C) Claiming he had advised the Sudanese FonMin during the latter's recent visit to hew to UNSC resolutions, Gul gave a general answer and expressed an interest in seeing the situation on the ground for himself. One of his aides present in the meeting chimed in that Gul would receive a full briefing Sept. 2 and that Turkey will send two planeloads of humanitarian assistance, accompanied by a minister and MPs, within a couple of weeks.

Armenia

11. (C) As Ambassador explained how steps by Turkey to open its border or allow increased economic exchanges will help the Administration manage the "Armenian Genocide" issue. Ambassador continued: a tripartite meeting with Gul's Armenian and Azerbaijani counterparts on the margins of UNGA which moved the ball forward or Turkish success in getting Russia to persuade Armenia to be more forthcoming on some of the occupied territories would also be helpful.

12. (C) Gul responded that he hoped to meet his counterparts in New York and hoped such a meeting would be more meaningful than previous ones. Turkey should indeed have relations with its smaller neighbor, and has shown its good intentions by allowing charter flights and transit of third-country goods. However, Armenia needs to make a gesture, for instance withdrawal from a few of the occupied regions. Turkey has told Azerbaijan that the situation cannot continue as is; at the same time Armenia must make a move. Oskanian is clever and rational, but we don't know if he is capable of movement; Turkey will ask the Russians (note: Putin was scheduled to pay a Sept. 2-3 visit, but postponed at last minute. End note) to use their leverage on the Armenians, but we don't know if the Russians prefer the problem to be solved or not, Gul stated.

Incirlik Military Transport Hub

13. (C) Ambassador reiterated the U.S. request to use the Incirlik airbase as an air mobility and logistics hub; the sooner the Turks could respond, the better. Gul limited himself to noting that the GOT is working the issue and continues to consult with the Turkish military.

Whither Bilateral Relations?

14. (C) Recalling that a new poll shows Turkish approval of the U.S. even lower than the poll results from France, Ambassador noted the U.S. view that Turkey does not have to choose between the U.S. and Europe but asked Gul how he sees bilateral relations evolving in the longer term if Turkey indeed gets an accession negotiation start date from the EU and moves closer to Europe.

15. (C) Initially at a loss for words, and with his notetakers -- all career diplomats -- looking uncomfortable, Gul then made a series of general remarks about relations not being artificial or conjunctural but continuing "as they are." Ambassador recalled that he had previously encountered the Eurasia theory when dealing with then-Russian FonMin, later PM, Primakov, and was surprised to find a similar discourse in Turkey, with figures across the spectrum on both right and left espousing Eurasianism as an alternative to the

U.S. or EU. Gul's special assistant Turkoglu jumped in to characterize Eurasia's adherents as very marginal. Another notetaker from MFA Policy Planning also hastened to dismiss Eurasia as an alternative to good relations with the U.S. Gul then stated that both "intellectually" and as a statesman he thinks Turkish-U.S. relations "will always be very special."

Iran

116. (C) Noting Graham Fuller's recently articulated view that the U.S. has to take account of Turkey's increased role in peripheral regions, Ambassador underscored that what will draw Washington's attention is Turkey's policy toward an Iran pursuing nukes. Gul asserted he had warned a high ranking Iranian emissary a few months ago that Iran could not manage to pull this policy off and should take a lesson from what happened to Saddam. The Iranians, who had come looking for Turkish support, were upset, Gul claimed, "because they didn't expect to hear this message from me."

Turkish Driver/Worker Security in Iraq

117. (C) Gul expressed concern that the problem of security for Turkish drivers and workers is getting more serious. The Turks have intelligence that Iraqi kidnappers have sources inside the compounds. On at least five occasions Iraqi police have worked in league with kidnappers by alerting them to the onward route of Turkish drivers they temporarily detain at police stations. therefore it is crucial to work together to increase security, Gul stated. Ambassador noted he had spoken to Minister for Foreign Trade Tuzmen Aug. 30 and, at Tuzmen's invitation, would call on him shortly to continue to discuss security cooperation; to the Turkish Union of Chambers; the truck drivers' association; and to high-ranking USG officials, asking for help from Washington and from the U.S. embassy and military in Iraq.

PKK

118. (C) Gul recalled his previous day's TV interview in which he had warned Turkey would keep all its options open, including cross-border incursions into Iraq. Every day Turkey is losing soldiers in the renewed fighting with the PKK, and the Turkish people are susceptible to the resulting anti-American propaganda. Ambassador noted our continuing joint intelligence work and the non-military actions we are considering. Regarding how to deal with the PKK stronghold on Kandil Mountain, the TGS would agree -- from its own experience -- how tough it would be to take out the stronghold militarily. In addition, the U.S. continues to confront serious disorder elsewhere in Iraq.

Aiyos Mamas Church

119. (C) At meeting's end Ambassador raised the lack of a GOT statement condemning the Aug. 27 bomb attack on Aiyos Mamas church in Guzelyurt/Morphou, northern Cyprus. A statement would help in the runup to the EU's December summit. Gul answered coldly that "PM" Talat had issued a statement and that his (Gul's) own general comment had been overlooked by the press. At this point DDG for the Americas Ilicak jumped in to point out that the MFA spokesman might have an opportunity to say something at the regular press conference later.
EDELMAN